**Terms of Reference**

**Request for Service**

**Call for Applications for Communications Expert(s)**

**Position:** Communications Expert(s)

**Main beneficiary:** Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)

**Financing institution:** United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

**Duration:** 40 days. Beginning of November 2020 – 28 February 2021

**Location:** Tirana, Albania

**Background**

RYCO is an intergovernmental organization that stewards and promotes regional, cross-border and intercultural cooperation within and among its six Western Balkan Contracting Parties: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo[[1]](#footnote-1), Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. RYCO’s program focuses on creating opportunities for young people to engage in activities that build mutual understanding and reconciliation in the civic, social, educational, cultural, and sports domains. RYCO initiates and participates in policy making and advocates for reform. It supports the development of a political and social environment that empowers and facilitates youth exchange. A key instrument enabling RYCO to fulfill its mission is grant-making; developing tailored calls for proposals that enable CSOs and schools to engage in initiatives that contribute to mutual understanding of youth from various communities across RYCO’s Contracting Parties, thus contributing to reconciliation and youth participation.

RYCO’s main strategic priorities during planning period 2019-2021 are: (SP1) Deliver Programs: develop regional cooperation, mobility and exchange; (SP2) Build demand: create and promote an enabling environment; and (SP3) Invest in competence: strengthen RYCO institutionally and organizationally. Through programming instruments, such as grants schemes and capacity building activities for CSOs and schools in the Western Balkans, RYCO seeks to contribute to improving the availability, accessibility, quality and impact of exchange, mobility and reconciliation efforts conducted with and for young people and those that work directly with them.

With the support of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, in partnership with UNDP – United Nations Development Programme, UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF - The United Nations Children's Fund, RYCO is implementing the project “Supporting the Western Balkan's Collective Leadership on Reconciliation: Building Capacity and Momentum for RYCO”.

Read more about the project [here](https://www.rycowb.org/?page_id=7704).

**Objective of Consultancy**

The communication expert(s) will be engaged to support RYCO in developing its Communication Strategy and Plan, based on RYCO Strategic Plan 2019-2021 and its strategic objectives, current projects and other needs of RYCO.

**Scope of Work**

The expert(s) will closely work with the RYCO staff and will take the lead on the following general tasks:

* Carry out a communication assessment and inception report by reviewing and gathering information on RYCO’s present and planned communication activities and organizational needs as well as identify potential communication, political and strategic risks based on the expert(s)’ assessment and already existing analyses. The Assessment and Inception Report will serve as a basis for planning the next steps and deliverables;
* Organize (with the support of the RYCO Secretariat) and conduct a cross-organizational one-day workshop for the RYCO Secretariat Staff to form a basis and collect inputs for the strategy. The workshop should be focused on mapping of target groups, identifying communication objectives for each targeted audience and activities to follow. The workshop should also explore the use of English and/or local languages for RYCO communication activities.
* Develop a communication strategy in direct cooperation with the RYCO task force coordinated by the RYCO Communication and Visibility Officer. It should be aligned with the RYCO Strategic Plan 2019-2021 and projects’ activities for the next two-year period. This may include:
  + Mapping of the target audiences relevant for RYCO’s work, e.g. young people, governments, international organizations, donors, media, etc. on the local, national and regional level;
  + Supporting RYCO in defining the key messages to be tailored for each of the identified target audiences for each of the levels;
  + Assessing the needs of each target audience groups and suggesting appropriate communication activities to meet the needs using the already established RYCO activities;
  + Identifying communication channels and dissemination methods to effectively communicate key messages to the identified target groups;
  + Developing a communication plan with clear deliverable outcomes, indicators and tools for the implementation of the strategy;
  + Developing a list of the resources needed (human and financial) as well as approximate budgetary needs for a successful implementation of the strategy;
  + Developing indicators to monitor and evaluate communications tools and activities to measure the impact on achieving the overall objectives. This should be aligned with the RYCO’s Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
  + Proposed infrastructure and systems to systematically source, collect, organize and report information and data related to external communication activities conducted by RYCO and its beneficiaries about their activities.
* Develop and design media toolkits and suggest the list of other communication materials needed for the implementation of the communication strategy;
* Design and organize an information exchange training for RYCO communication department staff to provide assistance and professional expertise on key aspects of internal and external relations communication strategies as well as organize a presentation on the Communication Strategy to relevant RYCO staff upon completion of the deliverables foreseen by this ToR ;
* Assist RYCO staff to map and create a database of local and regional media outlets with which RYCO could build links to enhance advocacy, outreach and strategic communications.
* Develop and design communication campaign, content and communication materials relevant for the RYCO-UN project implementation, in close cooperation with the RYCO Communication and Visibility Officer, respecting RYCO’s and project’s Visibility Guidelines. For more information on the project, please refer to the Background of this document;

**Key Outputs and Indicative Workdays Distribution**

The Communication Expert shall undertake and deliver the following:

1. Communication Assessment and Inception Report (including workshop) - 7 days
2. Communication Strategy - 14 days
3. Media mapping, media toolkit and list of recommended materials - 5 days
4. Training and presentation for relevant staff (communications and other) - 4 days
5. RYCO-UN project communication campaign and materials - 10 days

**Delivery Dates, Timeline and Remuneration**

The selected bidder will be invited to sign a service contract with RYCO. The Contract will be realized in Euro and the payment will be conducted in two installments - the first after a successful completion of the deliverables 1 and 2 and the second after a successful completion of the deliverables 3 and 4.

1. Deliverable 1 (15% of total amount) – draft of RYCO-UN project campaign (15 November 2020)
2. Deliverable 2 (25 % of total amount) – finalized RYCO-UN project campaign, communication assessment and Inception Report for RYCO Communication strategy (by 15 December 2020)
3. Deliverable 3 (50% of the total amount) - Communication Strategy with supporting documents (by 30 January 2021)
4. Deliverable 4 (10% of total amount) – media mapping and media toolkit with supporting documents, training and presentation for RYCO staff (by 28 February 2021)

For payment of each installment the expert will be requested to submit the approved deliverables and reports which should be in English and invoices (signed originals).

The financial offer cannot exceed 400 EUR gross per expert(s) day. The expert is responsible for paying all the taxes related to this assignment. Please note that all costs of travel and logistics should be included in the financial offer.

The consultancy will involve at least one working mission in Albania (5 days) if needed and possible due to the travel restrictions imposed by the local authorities combating the spread of the COVID-19.

**Expert(s) Profile**

The expert(s) should fulfill the following requirements:

* Advanced university degree in communication, marketing or related field;
* At least 10 years of experience and a proven track record in strategic communications planning, development, and advertising;
* Extensive consulting experience on designing, producing publishing and disseminating communication products;
* Relevant experience and background in working for governments and/or international organizations, especially in the field of strategic communications;
* Skilled in identifying communication challenges, opportunities and risks, and communicating broad and compelling organizational direction;
* Ability to work with and review data, presenting findings in a user friendly, clear and appropriate manner;
* Excellent oral and written proficiency in English required. Knowledge of other official languages of the Western Balkan region would be preferable;
* Ability to work in a multicultural environment and to display cultural, gender, nationality and religion sensitivity, and adaptability;
* Previous experience in and understanding of the Western Balkans region (political, economic, youth, public opinion, CSOs).

**Application Procedure:**

Interested applicants are advised to carefully study all sections of this ToRs and ensure that they meet the general requirements as well as specific qualifications described. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please make sure you have provided all requested materials. Interested experts should develop and submit their application and consultancy proposal in English, no later than 27/10/2020, 17h00, in electronic version, to [procurement@rycowb.org](mailto:procurement@rycowb.org).

The application should contain:

* Curriculum Vitae of expert(s), reference list and portfolio (if applicable);
* Cover letter explaining why you are the most suitable candidate(s) for the advertised position. The cover letter should explain the approach and how the assignment should be undertaken. Please demonstrate the success of the similar assignments undertaken in the past accompanied by reference letters of contractors for previous similar assignments;
* Provide links or attach similar work product
* Copy of diplomas and copy of passport.

**Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process**

Only the highest ranked candidate(s) who would be found qualified for the job will be considered for the financial evaluation. Interviews with the shortlisted candidates may be considered, before taking a final decision for the candidate who will be granted the contract.

**Technical Criteria - 70% of total evaluation**

Criteria A: Advanced University degree in communication, marketing or related field – max points: 5%

Criteria B: At least 10 years of experience and a proven track record in strategic communications planning, development, and advertising – max points: 20%;

Criteria C: Extensive consulting experience on designing, producing publishing and disseminating communication products – max points: 15%

Criteria D: Excellent oral and written proficiency in English required. Knowledge of other official languages of the Western Balkan region would be preferable – max points: 5%

Criteria E: Relevant experience and background in working for governments and/or international organizations, especially in the field of strategic communications; – max points: 15%;

Criteria F: Ability to work with and review data, presenting findings in a user friendly, clear and appropriate manner; - max points: 5%

Criteria G: Ability to work in a multicultural environment and to display cultural, gender, nationality and religion sensitivity, and adaptability; max points: 5%

Financial Offer - 30% of total evaluation

1. This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence [↑](#footnote-ref-1)